

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for use in a virus-free certificate proxy, of retrieving from one or a plurality of virus-free certificate authorities a virus-free certificate certifying that a file is virus-free, said method comprising the steps of:

- receiving a virus-free certificate request for a file;
- selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file;
- requesting the virus-free certificate to the selected virus-free certificate authority;
- receiving from the selected virus-free certificate authority the generated virus-free certificate; and
- sending back in response to the virus-free certificate request the received virus-free certificate; and

wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises: a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not and the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested.

2 and 3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises:

- an identification of the file comprising:
- a file identity, or
- an identification of the provider of the file, or
- both.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file comprises the further steps of:

- determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority or not; and
- if the virus-free certificate request does not comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table, said first table comprising for each identified file a list of one or a plurality anti-virus programs , each list being associated with a virus-free certificate authority .

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file comprises the further steps of:

- determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority or not;
- if the virus-free certificate request does not comprise an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate relay or not; and
- if the virus-certificate request does not comprise an identification of a virus-free certificate relay, selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table , said first table comprising for each identified file a list of one or a plurality anti-virus programs , each list being associated with a virus-free certificate authority , or a virus-free certificate relay or both.

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file comprises the further steps of:

- determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority or not; and
- if the virus-free certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, selecting the virus-free certificate authority identified in the virus-free certificate request.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file comprises the further steps of:

- determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority or not;
- if the virus-free certificate request does not comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate relay or not; and
- if the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate relay, selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to the virus-free certificate relay.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table comprises the steps of:

- determining whether the file is identified or not in the first table ;
- if the file is identified in the first table , selecting a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs according to a list of one or plurality of anti-virus programs that is included in the virus-free certificate request;
- determining whether a virus-free certificate authority is associated with the selected list or not; and
- if a virus-free certificate authority is associated with the selected list, selecting the virus-free certificate authority associated with the selected list.

10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table comprises the steps of:

- determining whether the file is identified or not in the first table ;
- if the file is identified in the first table , selecting a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs according to a list of one or plurality of anti-virus programs that is included in the virus-free certificate request;
- determining whether a virus-free certificate authority is associated with the selected list or not;
- if a virus-free certificate authority is not associated with the selected list, determining whether a virus-free certificate relay is associated with the selected list or not; and
- if a virus-free certificate relay is associated with the selected list, selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to the virus-free certificate relay.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table comprises the steps of:

- determining whether the file is identified or not in the first table ; and
- if the file is not identified in the first table , selecting a default virus-free certificate authority in the first table .

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 10 wherein the step of selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a virus-free certificate relay comprises the step of:

- selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a second table in said virus-free certificate relay, said second table comprising for each identified file

a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs, each list being associated with a virus-free certificate authority.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the generated virus-free certificate comprises:

- a file signature for certifying that the file is declared virus-free by the selected virus-free certificate authority .

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate further comprises:

- a file identification ;
- a virus-free certificate authority identification ;
- a public key for decrypting the file signature;
- a certificate signature for authenticating the virus-free certificate; and
- an indication of the virus-free certificate validity .

15. (Currently amended) A system implementing a virus-free certificate proxy, said system comprising a processor that executes a program for implementing a method having the steps of:

- receiving virus-free certificate request for a file;
- selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file;
- requesting the virus-free certificate to the selected virus-free certificate authority ;
- receiving from the selected virus-free certificate authority the generated virus-free certificate; and
- sending back in response to the virus-free certificate request the received virus-free certificate; and

wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises: a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not and the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested.

16. (Currently amended) A computer program recorded on a computer-readable medium and comprising instructions for executing a method having the steps of:

- receiving virus-free certificate request for a file;
- selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file;
- requesting the virus-free certificate to the selected virus-free certificate authority ;
- receiving from the selected virus-free certificate authority the generated virus-free certificate; and
- sending back in response to the virus-free certificate request the received virus-free certificate; and

wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises: a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not and the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested.

17. (New) A method for use in a virus-free certificate proxy, of retrieving from one or a plurality of virus-free certificate authorities a virus-free certificate certifying that a file is virus-free, said method comprising the steps of:

- receiving a virus-free certificate request for a file;
- selecting a virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate a virus-free certificate for the file;
- requesting the virus-free certificate to the selected virus-free certificate authority;
- receiving from the selected virus-free certificate authority the generated virus-free certificate; and

- sending back in response to the virus-free certificate request the received virus-free certificate;
- determining whether the virus-certificate request comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority or not; and
- if the virus-free certificate request does not comprises an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, selecting a virus-free certificate authority referring to a first table, said first table comprising for each identified file a list of one or a plurality anti-virus programs , each list being associated with a virus-free certificate authority, and

wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises: a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not, and an identification of the file comprising: a file identity, or an identification of the provider of the file, or both.